

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

MEMORANDUM OF TELEPHONE CONVERSATION

SUBJECT: Telcon with President of Russia (S)

PARTICIPANTS: The President
President Putin

Interpreter: Peter Afanasenko

Notetakers: Tim Cronin, Belinda Jackson,
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DATE, TIME March 4, 2006, 1:23 - 1:40 p.m. EST
AND PLACE: Air Force One

The President: Hey Vladimir (U)

President Putin: Good to hear you. Hello. I followed very closely your movements around the globe from Afghanistan to Pakistan. I am trying to follow closely your movements. You made a roar in Afghanistan. Sir, as I reckon you are making war with the Taliban in Afghanistan. (S)

The President: Thank you. (U)

President Putin: I would like to inform you about our meeting with the Iranians. Now, as far as Hamas is concerned, as you know Mr. President, we met them here in Moscow. At the meeting, we had representatives in the foreign arm and the Palestinian territories represented. As a foundation for negotiations we insisted on the Quartet rules. I must say that we did not note any tough, immovable position on the part of the Hamas representatives. Now it's also understandable that they are just getting comfortable on accepting new power. What would I say as far as some of the principal positions? They are ready to accept Abbas as the leader of the autonomy there, and give him the right to determine foreign policy. And they fully feel that it's possible to expect that Israel will perform in an analogously similar fashion. What I noticed very interestingly is that they do not resist using the Roadmap in future progress in their region. And they also note that Israel should follow the Roadmap very scrupulously and not insist on the addition of

10, 15, and 20 additional changes which would make this Roadmap useless. I consider this substantially important, because this in fact can be interpreted to signal a first sign of recognition of Israel. Of course, immediate direct recognition of Israel would be impossible and problematic at this stage of the game because they are just starting out. (X)

Now as far as international donor assistance is concerned, I notice that they are fully ready to exercise transparency, openness, anything necessary to garner assistance, including the establishment of regional or international control mechanisms to oversee this assessment. In general, overall I think these contacts were useful. And I think that if we use the Quartet framework we might expect some successes in getting some progress in certain areas in one way or another. I would like to call Olmert in Israel tomorrow and inform him about this as well. You know I really think that as far as the Palestinian Authority is concerned, we ought not block assistance for them, because they are going to get assistance from other sources that you and I might not find appropriate or acceptable. (X)

Now as far as Iran is concerned, we held a series of consultations with the Iranians before they flew off to Vienna. We proceeded from several important premises and here they are as follows. First of all, they must return to the positions contained in the additional protocol. Second, they must not hold back for 2 or 3 years and they must immediately take this protocol to their parliament and have it ratified. Third, we talked about the establishment of a joint enterprise on the territory of Russia for the pursuit of enriching uranium. The most difficult thing would be how to deal with their intention to talk themselves into a position where they would have the right to carry out nuclear research on their own territory, just the research part. To this we responded to them as follows. We told them that they have to hold meetings and consultations with the IAEA and only to ask whether or not its feasible to do research on their own territory. We are not going to discuss this issue with them. After they went to Vienna and held a series of useless talks that never led to anything, especially with the trio in Vienna, they surprisingly and without informing us flew back to Moscow instead of flying home to Iran. So Igor Ivanov is now holding consultations with them. And as far as we can see they do not have a unified position because various teams of negotiators on our side got different kinds of answers and different positions, so they don't have a unified position. But those negotiators that came to Moscow appear to be looking for a way out of the situation. If there is anything new or

(interesting, we will inform you right away. And our deputy foreign minister is now in Vienna and talking to negotiators in Vienna to see what he can find out. And Minister Lavrov will be coming to Washington soon and he will brief me. (S)

The President: First, thank you very much for the briefing. Secondly, I'm going to see Lavrov on Tuesday. The Roadmap says that the Palestinians, whoever they are, must recognize Israel, renounce terror, and disband militias. The Quartet statements say that. Hopefully that's what Hamas will do. My only other point is that on Iran, it's very dangerous if they do research. I'm very worried about that because research means they could develop a clandestine nuclear operation. We'll talk to Lavrov about it but it makes me very nervous. One thing is for certain, you are in the middle of a lot of action. (S)

President Putin: Yes, you should stop by. You are flying by anyway, we could have a Coca-Cola, or a cup of tea. (U)

The President: I'll be over there soon. I have to go home and see Barney. (U)

(President Putin: My best regards. Say hi to everybody and have a nice, safe trip. (U)

The President: Alright Vladimir, thank you very much for calling. You're very kind to think of me. (U)

President Putin: Bye Mr. President. All the best. (U)

The President: Goodbye. (U)

-- End of Conversation --